

U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/591,508
Office Action dated July 27, 2004
Response dated November 16, 2004

REMARKS

Claims 2, 7, 9 and 15 - 17 have been amended in order to more particularly point out, and distinctly claim the subject matter to which the applicants regard as their invention. The applicants respectfully submit that no new matter has been added. It is believed that this Response is fully responsive to the Office Action dated July 27, 2004.

Claims 2 - 5, 7, 9 - 12 and 15 - 17 remain in this application, claims 2, 7, 9 and 15 - 17 being independent claims. Claims 1, 6, 8, 13 and 14 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer.

Claims 2 - 5, 7, 9 - 12 and 15 - 17 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) based on Kazuaki (JP 10-296018) in view of Masao (JP10-175172), and further in view of EP 92309078 (hereinafter, "EP '078"). The applicants respectfully request reconsideration of this rejection.

The applicants respectfully submit that significant features of the applicants' method of grinding a magnetic member (as now set forth in each of independent claims 2 and 17) include the claimed second step of magnetically separating sludge from the grinding fluid drained from the grinding region by using magnetic separation means. Significant features of the applicants' claimed invention, as now set forth in each of independent claims 2 and 17, further include the magnetic

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separation means having a magnet roller with a plurality of magnets disposed in longitudinal lines and circumferential rows, the polarity of the magnets being alternated in each of the longitudinal lines of the magnets, and in each of the circumferential rows of the magnets.

Significant features of the applicants' claimed method of treating waste fluid, as now set forth in independent claim 7, include the magnetic separation means having a magnet roller with a plurality of magnets disposed in longitudinal lines and circumferential rows, the polarity of the magnets being alternated in each of the longitudinal lines of the magnets, and in each of the circumferential rows of the magnets.

Significant structural arrangements of the applicants' claimed apparatus for grinding a magnetic member, as now set forth in independent claim 9, include the magnetic separation means having a magnet roller with a plurality of magnets disposed in longitudinal lines and circumferential rows, the polarity of the magnets being alternated in each of the longitudinal lines of the magnets, and in each of the circumferential rows of the magnets.

Significant features of the applicants' method for obtaining a rare-earth magnet by using a grinding method (as now set forth in independent claim 15) include the claimed second step of magnetically separating sludge from the grinding fluid drained from the grinding region by using magnetic separation means. Significant features of the applicants' claimed invention, as now set

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forth in independent claim 15, further include the magnetic separation means having a magnet roller with a plurality of magnets disposed in longitudinal lines and circumferential rows, the polarity of the magnets being alternated in each of the longitudinal lines of the magnets, and in each of the circumferential rows of the magnets.

Significant features of the applicants' method for grinding a magnetic member (as now set forth in independent claim 16) include the claimed second step of magnetically separating fine-particle sludge from the grinding fluid drained from the grinding region by using magnetic separation means. Significant features of the applicants' claimed invention, as now set forth in independent claim 16, further include the magnetic separation means having a magnet roller with a plurality of magnets disposed in longitudinal lines and circumferential rows, the polarity of the magnets being alternated in each of the longitudinal lines of the magnets, and in each of the circumferential rows of the magnets.

The applicants respectfully submit the above significant structural arrangements or features of the claimed invention, including the claimed magnetic separation means with such claimed magnets (as now set forth in each of independent claims 2, 7, 9 and 15 - 17) can draw the sludge more efficiently.

Kazuaki, Masao and EP '078, singly or in combination, do not disclose or suggest such

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significant claimed structural arrangements or features of the applicants' claimed invention and the benefits or advantages derived therefrom. Thus, even if, *arguendo*, the teachings of Kazuaki, Masao and EP '078 can be combined in the manner suggested by the Examiner, such combined teachings would still fall far short in fully meeting the applicants' claimed invention, as now set forth in independent claims 2, 7, 9 and 15 - 17 (and the claims dependent therefrom). As such, a person of ordinary skill in the art would not have found the applicants' claimed invention obvious under 35 USC 103(a) based on Kazuaki, Masao and EP '078, singly or in combination.

In view of the above, the withdrawal of the outstanding obviousness rejection under 35 USC 103(a) based on Kazuaki (JP 10-296018) in view of Masao (JP10-175172), and further in view of EP 92309078 is in order, and is therefore respectfully solicited.

In view of the aforementioned amendments and accompanying remarks, claims, as amended, are in condition for allowance, which action, at an early date, is requested.

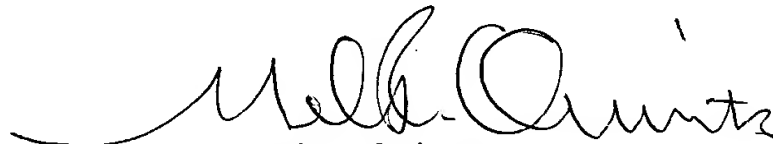
If, for any reason, it is felt that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the applicants' undersigned attorney at the telephone number indicated below to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

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In the event that this paper is not timely filed, the applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. Please charge any fees for such an extension of time and any other fees which may be due with respect to this paper to Deposit Account No. 01-2340.

Respectfully submitted,

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